





## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Administrators

**FROM:** Mike Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction   
Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

Mike Bugenski, Director   
North Central Association (NCA)

**DATE:** October 29, 2007

**SUBJECT:** MDE/NCA Accreditation and School Improvement Collaboration

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) are excited to announce a new partnership to provide aligned accreditation and school improvement services to schools and districts across the state.

In collaboration with AdvancED, the parent organization of NCA CASI, both organizations are working to provide Michigan schools with a comprehensive, integrated, and user friendly planning process that meets all requirements for both state and NCA CASI accreditation. An exciting feature of this partnership will include a new web site that will allow schools to electronically complete a comprehensive needs assessment, develop a school improvement plan, and meet requirements for reports such as the Education YES! state accreditation program. This process will allow schools and districts across the state to avoid having to do multiple accreditation and school improvement tasks. The collaboration will enable schools to meet multiple requirements put forth by various state and federal legislation and other organizations.

Schools in Michigan that are **not** members of NCA CASI will be able to complete the Education YES! Performance Indicator for the 2006 – 2007 school year. Volunteers are being sought to complete the state's Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) in an electronic environment. Information from the work done by the volunteer schools will be used to

determine the appropriate cycle and content of the CNA for all non-NCA schools. The work done by the volunteer school on the CNA will form the basis of the building's school improvement plan in the new website being launched at the School Improvement Conference in November. To volunteer to be part of the CNA project, please contact Linda Kent at [kentl2@michigan.gov](mailto:kentl2@michigan.gov) or at 517-373-8480. The new website will be able to export the Education YES! Performance Indicator ratings to the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA).

For Michigan schools that **are** members of NCA CASI, the partnership means that completion of the Standard Assessment Report (SAR) once every five years, or the new annual Self-Assessment, will meet the annual Education YES! requirements as well as federal requirements for a comprehensive needs assessment. The information from these instruments will be used to complete your school improvement plan on the new website. NCA schools will utilize the same template that is available to all other Michigan schools.

Look for more detailed information in the coming weeks regarding this coordinated and systematic approach to accreditation and school improvement. In the meantime, mark your calendars for two conferences hosted by MDE and NCA CASI. The NCA CASI Fall Conference will be held on November 6-7, 2007. MDE's School Improvement Conference is scheduled for November 25-26, 2007. In the spring, MDE and NCA CASI will co-host a two-day conference. The dates for that conference are April 7-8, 2008.

Meanwhile, be sure to visit the following websites for more information on the conferences, highlights of the agreement between NCA CASI and MDE, and other useful information:

[www.michigan.gov/schoolimprovement](http://www.michigan.gov/schoolimprovement)  
[www.ncamichigan.org](http://www.ncamichigan.org)

Part of the agreement between NCA CASI and MDE includes a liaison who will be available to answer questions regarding the implementation of this agreement. We are delighted to have Reniero Araoz, a former high school principal and central office administrator, helping us with this very important work. His experience with NCA CASI and expectations for Michigan schools will be valuable during the implementation of the agreement. Please contact Reniero Araoz at [araozr@michigan.gov](mailto:araozr@michigan.gov) or [raraoz@ncamichigan.org](mailto:raraoz@ncamichigan.org) if you have any questions.

We look forward to an exciting partnership leading to a reduction in duplication of effort and improved student achievement across the state.